



GENERAL INFORMATION

Lee McClellan photo

FISHING TOURNAMENTS

As a voluntary program, fishing event organizers are strongly urged to use the Tournament web site at fw.ky.gov/tournamentschedule.aspx to register and report on their events. Tournament planners can avoid space conflicts with other previously registered events by adjusting the date, time, specific launch areas or weigh-in site for their activities.

Other recreational anglers and boaters can check the web site to see when and where fishing events are scheduled. This will assist them in planning their activities and also help avoid potential space conflicts. Additional permits may be required by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers or the U.S. Forest Service.

If the launch site for your tournament involves using a marina ramp, please contact the marina operator before scheduling your tournament.

There are an estimated 800 - 1,000 fishing tournaments held annually in Kentucky waters. These can be a valuable source of information to our fishery biologists. Following each scheduled

event, tournament organizers are asked to report their catch data directly on the tournament web site or on forms which can be sent via postal mail. Voluntary cooperation from tournament organizers will be used in making fishery management decisions. At the end of the tournament season, a summary of tournament results will be sent to all providers. If not provided with one, contact your local fisheries district office. They will provide a packet.

Bigger tournaments

Fishing tournaments involving 100 or more boats are regulated and scheduled by the Division of Law Enforcement, 1-800-858-1549.

KEEPING YOUR BASS ALIVE

Summer tournament fishing places great stress on bass due to high water temperatures. Kentucky Fish and Wildlife recommends tournament anglers and directors follow these simple steps during summer tournaments that run from June through August.

- Stress caused by handling and livewell

confinement is the major factor that increases mortality of tournament caught bass. Hot water and low oxygen increase stress.

- Stress can be reduced by **continual** operation of the aerator in a closed livewell. Do not pump hot lake water into the livewell.
- Keeping livewell temperature 5-10 degrees F cooler than the lake water greatly reduces stress. Cool water holds more oxygen.
- Two frozen ½ gallon jugs of water or an 8 pound ice block will cool a 30 gallon livewell by 10 degrees F for about 3 hours. To avoid temperature shock, do not cool by more than 10 degrees. Livewell temperature should never be allowed to rise above 85 degrees F. Extra jugs or blocks can be carried in a cooler or insulated boat compartment.
- Livewell temperatures should be checked every hour with ice added or removed as needed.
- Non-iodized salt (available at farm supply stores) helps reduce stress. Add ½ cup per 5 gallons of livewell water. Salt can be pre-measured for the size of your livewell and put in small plastic bags.

- If you have more than 10 pounds of bass in your livewell you should exchange $\frac{1}{2}$ the water half way through your tournament day. Remember to adjust the temperature and add $\frac{1}{2}$ a dose of salt when you add fresh water.
- Operate the weigh-in process as quickly and efficiently as possible to reduce stress on the bass.

These simple procedures can significantly increase the survival of tournament caught and released bass providing a chance to catch these bass again in future tournaments.

CATCH AND RELEASE

The KDFWR supports catch and release of fish not needed for the table. **Releasing fish in a healthy state is an excellent conservation tool to maintain quality fishing opportunities.**

When releasing a fish, keep the fish in the water as much as possible. Do not allow the fish to flop in the boat or on the ground; the use of a net will assist you in controlling the fish. Gently handle the

fish with wet hands and do not squeeze the fish or touch the gill or eye areas. Trout are better immobilized if held upside down. Black bass are easier to handle if held by the lower jaw. Remove hooks quickly using needle-nosed pliers. Deeply hooked fish should be released by clipping the line close to the mouth – don't attempt to remove the hook. Sliding the fish back and forth through the water a few times will help it to become reoriented, and sometimes aids in its recovery.

Striped Bass: Adult striped bass are highly susceptible to delayed mortality following their release, even though these fish may initially appear in good condition. This is particularly a problem when water temperatures exceed 70 degrees. It is best not to release legal sized striped bass during this time.

A study reports that live-bait anglers can increase striped bass survival (12 fold) by using non-offset circle hooks (sizes 9/0 and 10/0). These hooks are available from major hook manufacturers, but are generally used by saltwater anglers.

Smaller sized circle hooks from size 1 to size 3/0 work well for other species the angler plans to release such as Cum-

berland River rainbow trout in the 15 to 20-inch slot limit. Live bait anglers who pursue black bass would increase survival by using similar sized circle hooks. Anglers must resist setting the hook and simply reel and tighten the line. The fish will hook itself in the top or corner of the mouth with gentle pressure. Hook setting pulls the circle hook from the fish's mouth.

LITTERING

(KRS 433.757)

Littering is not only unsightly, but is harmful to humans and wildlife. Fishing line should be discarded in the trash or at a recycling center, not in or around bodies of water. Discarded fishing line may be hazardous to wildlife and the lower unit of boats. Animals may be ensnared in the line and lose appendages or die. Fishing line caught in a prop shaft may cause seal leaks and lower unit failure. Anglers, unfortunately, are often the biggest litter bugs. These actions cast a bad light on all anglers. Littering in or around any public waterway is against the law. Please be responsible.

Kentucky
AFIELD

Makes fishing easier.

FISH RIGHT HERE
↓

HERE TOO
↓

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100
FEET

Kentucky Afield magazine can show you the best places to find fish and wildlife, plus provide the latest Kentucky outdoor news, advice and answers from our experts, recipes for your game or fish, profiles on wildlife management areas and more.

A one-year subscription includes four issues plus the award-winning Outdoor Calendar for only \$10 (\$18 for two years). Subscribe online at fw.ky.gov or call 1-800-858-1549 – and get more out of your fishing trip!

FISH CONSUMPTION ADVISORIES

The Kentucky Departments for Environmental Protection, Health Services and Fish and Wildlife Resources jointly issue a fish consumption advisory to the public when fish are found contaminated. Trace contaminants such as polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB), chlordane and mercury are found in some fish in Kentucky. An advisory cautions people about potential health problems that may result from eating fish caught from a particular area. An advisory does not ban eating fish; it is a guide to reduce your risk. This guide provides information on how often fish may be safely eaten.

STATEWIDE

All waters are under advisory for mercury. Women of childbearing age and children 6 years of age or younger should eat no more than one meal per week of freshwater fish. Adult men and other women are not included in the consumption notice.

This is not an emergency as organic mercury can occur naturally in the environment and does not affect swimmers, skiers or boaters. Fish can accumulate low levels of mercury by eating plankton and other small aquatic creatures.

CONSUMPTION GUIDELINES

A new method for reporting fish consumption advisories has been adopted. Consumption rates for specific

fish have been developed based on a meal of ½ pound of fish (before cooking) eaten by a 150-pound individual. Following these guidelines and spacing your meals of those fish species will limit your health risks by reducing your total exposure. See table below.

Sensitive population

Women of childbearing age, children 6 years of age or younger, pregnant and nursing women and women who plan to become pregnant should follow the advisories in the "Sensitive Population" category.

| NUMBER OF MEALS PER SPECIES | General Population | Sensitive Population |
|---|--------------------|----------------------|
| FISH LAKE, Ballard Co. (from lake headwaters to outflow of Shawnee Creek) | | |
| Black bass* and suckers/carp (mercury) | 1/month | 6/year |
| GREEN RIVER LAKE (from lake headwaters to dam) | | |
| Black bass*, catfish, drum (mercury) and suckers/carp (PCB) | 1/month | 6/year |
| GUIST CREEK LAKE, Shelby Co. (from lake headwaters to dam) | | |
| Black bass* (mercury) | 1/month | 6/year |
| KNOX CREEK, Pike Co. (from VA/KY state line to Tug Fork River) | | |
| Flathead catfish (PCB and mercury) | No consumption | |
| Channel catfish and drum (PCB) | 6/year | No consumption |
| Black bass*, crappie and rock bass (PCB and mercury) | 1/month | 6/year |
| LAKE CUMBERLAND (from confluence of Laurel and Cumberland rivers to Wolf Creek Dam) | | |
| Black bass* (mercury) | 1/month | 6/year |
| Crappie and rock bass (mercury) | 1/week | 1/month |
| LEVISA FORK RIVER, Pike Co. (from VA/KY state line to Fishtrap Lake dam, including Fishtrap Lake) | | |
| Channel catfish, drum, white bass and suckers/carp (PCB and mercury) | 1/month | 6/year |
| Black bass* and flathead catfish (PCB and mercury) | 1/week | 1/month |
| METROPOLIS LAKE, McCracken Co. | | |
| All species (PCB and mercury) | 1/month | |
| MUD RIVER, Logan Co. (from Hancock Lake Dam to Wolf Lick Creek) | | |
| Catfish, drum, suckers/carp (PCB) | No consumption | |
| Black bass*, crappie and sunfish (PCB) | 1/month | 6/year |
| MUD RIVER, Butler and Muhlenberg cos. (from Wolf Lick Creek to Green River) | | |
| Catfish, drum, suckers/carp (PCB) | 1/month | 6/year |
| Black bass*, crappie and sunfish (PCB) | 1/week | 1/month |

*Black bass include largemouth, smallmouth and spotted bass.

| NUMBER OF MEALS PER SPECIES, cont. | General Population | Sensitive Population |
|--|--------------------|----------------------|
| OHIO RIVER, UPPER REACH (mouth of the Big Sandy River to Markland L&D) | | |
| Channel catfish over 21" and paddlefish (and their eggs) | 6/year | No consumption |
| Carp, channel catfish under 21", drum, hybrid striped bass, smallmouth buffalo and white bass | 1/month | 6/year |
| Black bass*, flathead catfish and sauger | 1/week | 1/month |
| White crappie | unlimited | 1/week |
| OHIO RIVER, MIDDLE REACH (Markland L&D to Cannelton L&D) | | |
| Channel catfish over 21" and paddlefish (and their eggs) | 6/year | No consumption |
| Carp, channel catfish under 21", drum, hybrid striped bass and white bass | 1/month | 6/year |
| Black bass*, flathead catfish and sauger | 1/week | 1/month |
| OHIO RIVER, LOWER REACH (Cannelton L&D to mouth of Ohio River) | | |
| Paddlefish (and their eggs) | 6/year | No consumption |
| Blue catfish over 14", channel catfish, carp, drum, hybrid striped bass and white bass | 1/month | 6/year |
| Blue catfish under 14", bigmouth buffalo, black bass* and sauger | 1/week | 1/month |
| TOWN BRANCH, Logan Co. | | |
| All species (PCB) | No consumption | |

*Black bass include largemouth, smallmouth and spotted bass.

OTHER ADVISORIES

Consumption advisories are also in effect for fish in the following waters:

- **Drakes Creek, Simpson/Warren County:** All fish from dam on W. Fork at Franklin, Ky. downstream to confluence with Barren River. (PCB)
- **Little Bayou Creek:** All fish from section of creek located in McCracken County. (PCB)

REDUCE YOUR RISK

Risks from eating contaminated fish can be reduced by the following:

- fillet the fish, remove the skin and trim all fat
- do not eat fish eggs
- broil, grill or bake the fillets instead of frying or microwaving
- do not eat or reuse juices or fats that cook out of the fish.

PARASITES AND GRUBS IN FISH

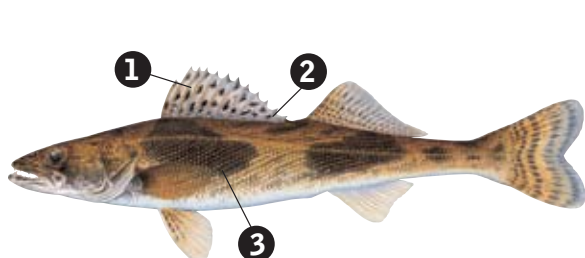
Kentucky anglers will occasionally clean a fish and find a white or yellowish color worm in the fish's flesh that is about the size of a grain of rice. Or, when stream fishing, an angler will encounter a smallmouth bass or sunfish with small black specks on its belly or across its body.

This is a parasitic fluke that requires different host animals to complete its life cycle: a fish eating bird, a snail and a fish. The grub matures and produces eggs inside a host fish-eating bird such as a Great Blue Heron. The eggs enter the water from the bird's droppings

or from its mouth. The eggs hatch and tiny larvae of the parasite burrow into a snail. After a time in the snail, the parasite changes form and swims to its next host, a fish. Inside the fish, the parasite changes to a grub form and waits for the fish to be eaten. Then, the cycle repeats.

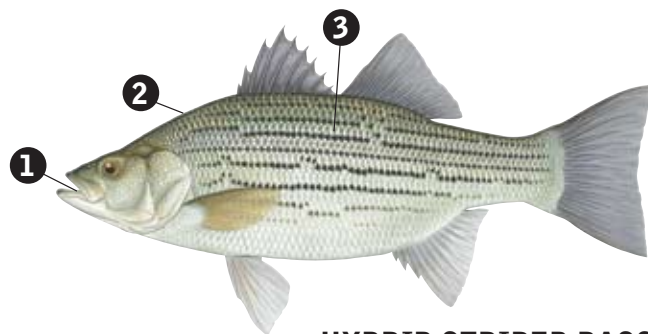
The angler's first instinct is to discard any fish with either the grubs in the flesh or black specks on the body. Grub-infested fish are safe to eat. Grubs do not infect people. Remove any grubs found and prepare the fish as you normally would.

ANGLER'S FISH IDENTIFICATION GUIDE



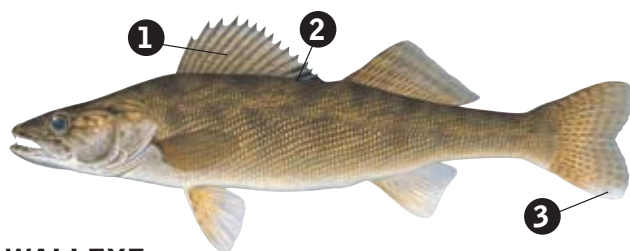
SAUGER

1. Rows of dark spots on spiny dorsal fin, 2. No dark blotch at rear of spiny dorsal fin, 3. Dark saddle-like blotches which extend onto the sides of the body



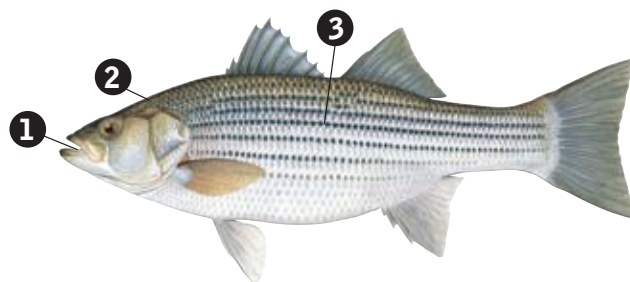
HYBRID STRIPED BASS

1. Tooth patch on tongue consists of two rows of teeth, often partially joined, 2. Back moderately arched, 3. Most stripes are broken, many more than once



WALLEYE

1. Dark streaks or blotches on spiny dorsal fin, but not distinct spots, 2. Dark blotch at rear of spiny, dorsal fin, 3. White spot on lower lobe of tail fin



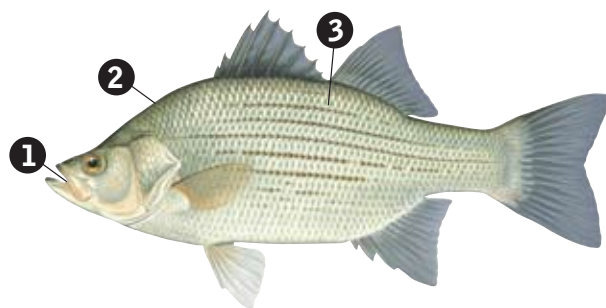
STRIPED BASS

1. Tooth patch on tongue consists of two distinctly split, parallel rows of teeth, 2. Back slightly arched, more streamlined, 3. Stripes very distinct and most extend fully onto tail



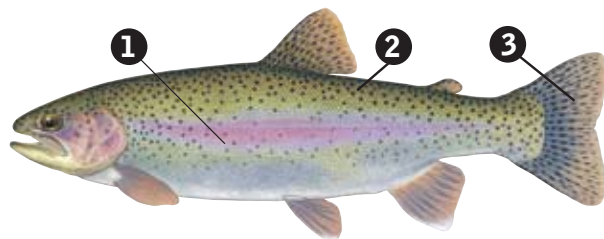
BROWN TROUT

1. Dark spots and orange or red spots with blue halos, 2. No spots on tail fin



WHITE BASS

1. Single tooth patch on tongue, 2. Back arched, 3. Stripes often faint and irregular



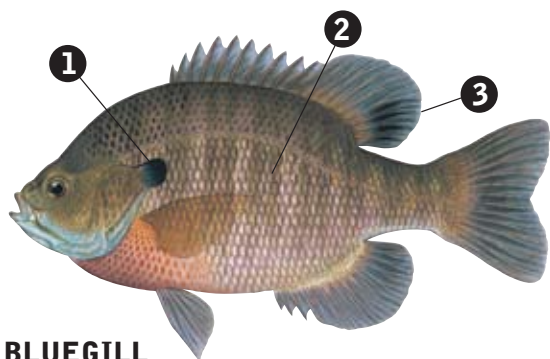
RAINBOW TROUT

1. Pink to red stripe on side, 2. Back and sides heavily speckled, 3. Spots on tail fin



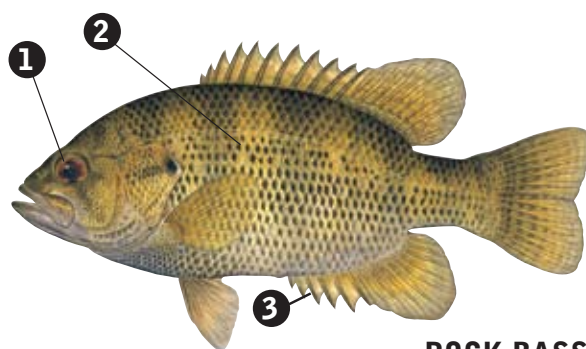
MUSKELLUNGE

1. Duck-like bill with sharp teeth, 2. No scales on lower half of cheek and gill flap



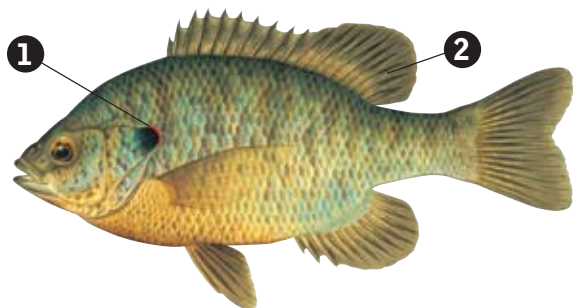
BLUEGILL

1. Gill flap black, 2. Vertical bars on side, 3. Dark blotch at rear of soft dorsal fin



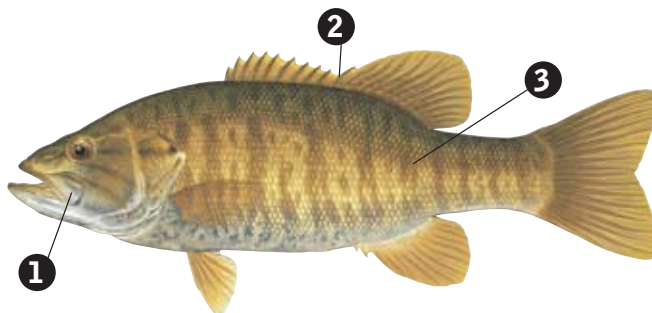
ROCK BASS

1. Eye rimmed in red, 2. Most scales have a dark spot, 3. Anal fin has five or six spines



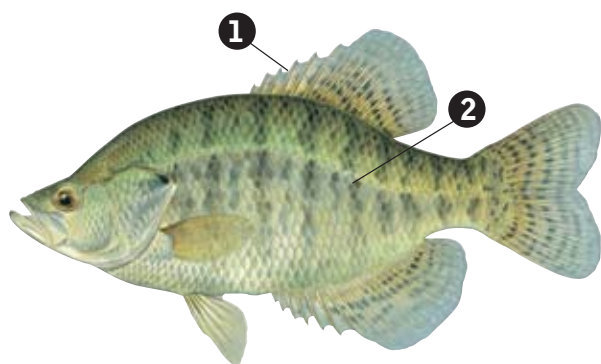
REDEAR SUNFISH

1. Gill flap black with orange or red margin, 2. No dark blotch at rear of soft dorsal fin



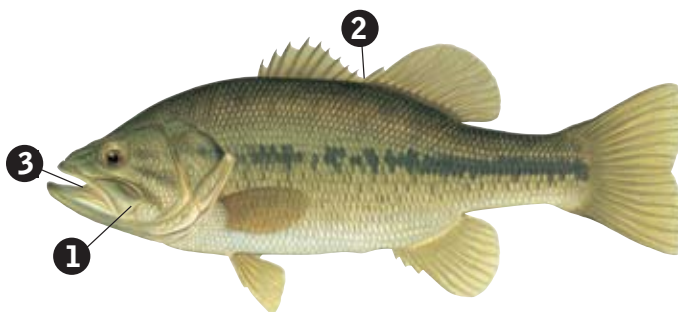
SMALLMOUTH BASS

1. Upper jaw does not extend beyond back of eye, 2. Shallow notch between dorsal fins, 3. Bronze colored with vertical bars on side



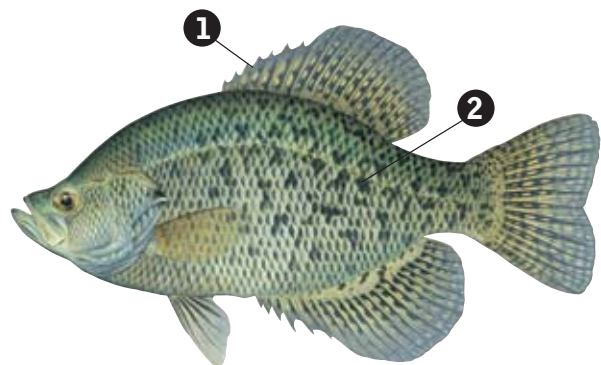
WHITE CRAPPIE

1. Dorsal fin has five or six spines, 2. Vertical bars on side



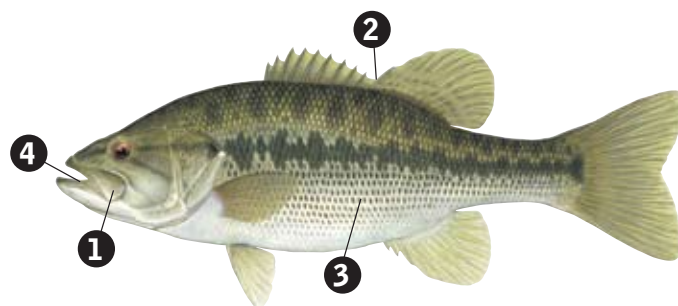
LARGEMOUTH BASS

1. Upper jaw extends beyond back of eye, 2. Dorsal fins separated by deep notch, 3. Tongue without tooth patch



BLACK CRAPPIE

1. Dorsal fin has seven or eight spines, 2. Irregular black blotches on side



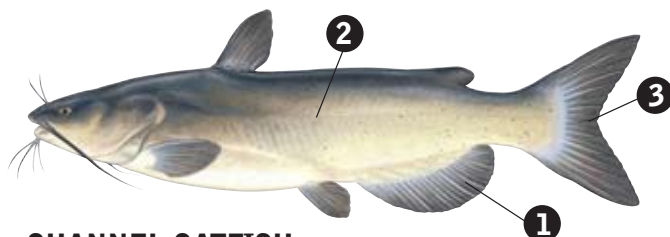
SPOTTED BASS

1. Upper jaw does not extend beyond back of eye, 2. Shallow notch between dorsal fins, 3. Rows of dark spots below lateral line, 4. Single tooth patch on tongue



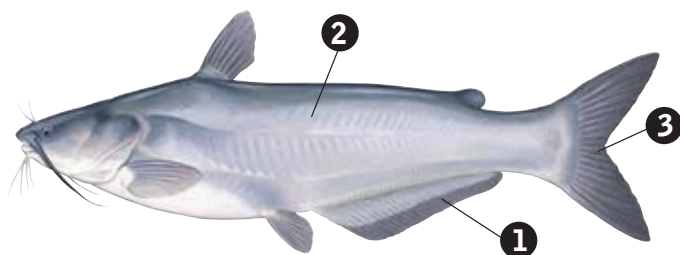
FLATHEAD CATFISH

1. Lower jaw projects far beyond upper jaw, 2. Tail fin not deeply forked, 3. Head is compressed on flathead catfish



CHANNEL CATFISH

1. Outer margin of anal fin rounded, with 24 to 29 rays, 2. Dark spots usually on body, 3. Tail fin deeply forked



BLUE CATFISH

1. Outer margin of anal fin straight, with 30 to 35 rays, 2. Body without dark spots, 3. Tail fin deeply forked



LAKE STURGEON

Lake sturgeon may not be harvested statewide. If you see or catch a lake sturgeon, please report the catch or sighting to Matt Thomas at (502) 564-7109.

KENTUCKY THREATENED AND ENDANGERED FISHES

These four species of fish are protected under the Federal Endangered Species Act. It is illegal to take these fish species and utilize them for any purpose including as live bait for fishing (see page 6).



BLACKSIDE DACE

Found only in small (wadeable) streams in the Upper Cumberland River Basin including Letcher, Harlan, Bell, Whitley, Knox, McCreary, Pulaski and Laurel counties.



PALEZONE SHINER

Found only in the Little South Fork of the Cumberland River in McCreary and Wayne counties.



RELICT DARTER

Found only in the Bayou du Chien River in Hickman and Graves counties.



DUSKYTAIL DARTER

Found only in the Big South Fork of the Cumberland River in McCreary County.

AQUATIC NUISANCE SPECIES

It's the law

No live fish, live minnow, or live bait organisms not native or established in Kentucky shall be bought, sold, possessed, imported, or in any way used or released into Kentucky waters.

Sport anglers unintentionally and intentionally stock fish in Kentucky's public waters. These species mainly include gizzard shad and alewives that are present in several water bodies. Gizzard shad have been illegally released in several small public lakes where they previously were not present. They interfere with the lake's ability to support a quality bluegill population. Alewives are a non-native fish illegally stocked into several Kentucky lakes. The total impact of these fish is not known, but they are known to eat young fish, including sport fishes.

Additionally, there are many non-native aquatic species that invaded the country, particularly in Great Lake states. These include both plants and animals such as Eurasian watermilfoil, round goby, ruffe, spring water flea, and zebra mussels.

ASIAN CARP

Much like the zebra mussel and other non-native species introduced into Kentucky, two new species of Asian carp, the big head and silver, have invaded river systems in Kentucky, particularly the lower Ohio, Tennessee and Cumberland rivers. Both of these species are plankton eaters and may exceed 50 pounds in size. Their impact on native species is not fully understood, but they represent a competitive threat to other plankton eating fish such as our native paddlefish and most of our sport fish at early life stages.

These species are probably spawning in these river systems and their young

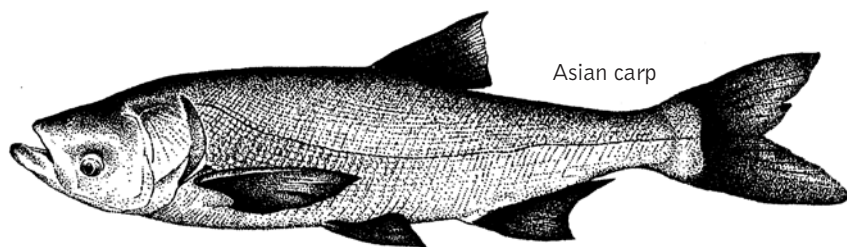
HELP KEEP OUT NON-NATIVE SPECIES

- **CLEAN** your boat and trailer before launching into or leaving any waterbody.
- **REMOVE** all plants and animals.
- **DRAIN** all water from bilges and livewells.
- **DISPOSE** of unwanted live bait on shore – **DO NOT STOCK THE LAKE!**
- **RINSE** your boat, trailer and equipment with high pressure hot water.
- **DRY** everything for at least five days.

can be easily mistaken as shad or skipjack herring. **All bait collectors using cast or dip nets, especially from Kentucky and Barkley tailwaters, should never dispose of any live bait into other water bodies due to the potential threat of spreading these aquatic nuisance species.**

ZEBRA MUSSELS

Kentucky has zebra mussels present in our waters and are at nuisance levels in the Ohio River. They attach themselves to any solid submerged surface in a cluster, reproduce rapidly, and pose a serious threat to native freshwater mussel populations. These mussels have elongated pointed shells less than two inches long with a zebra like pattern of stripes. Zebra mussels can live 8 to 10 days out of water and can be transported to another water body while attached to a boat.



Asian carp

HYDRILLA

Hydrilla is an exotic plant invading Kentucky through transfer of plant fragments by boats and personal watercraft. All it takes is a small fragment of the plant to start a new colony. This plant forms extremely dense mats that grow to the surface of the waterbody making boating and swimming difficult. It literally fills shallow areas from top to bottom with vegetation.

Hydrilla also chokes out native plants and displaces fish. It is extremely difficult to eradicate once it becomes established.

The noxious plant is now in Carr Creek, Dewey, Paintsville and Kentucky lakes. In order to limit the spread of this nuisance plant, please check all trailer parts, boat motor and other equipment for mud or pieces of plant and remove before leaving the lake.

VHS VIRUS

Viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS) has been identified in common fish species in the Great Lakes states. Die-offs have been documented in crappie, bluegill, smallmouth bass, freshwater drum, and muskellunge. Officials also detected the virus in white bass, walleye and some sucker species. Movement of fish from infected waters is a possible pathway for the virus to infect Kentucky waters.

DO NOT TRANSFER fish or water from any water body to avoid movement of this pathogen. Symptoms of the virus include bulging eyes, bloated abdomens, inactive or over-active behavior and hemorrhaging in the eyes, skin, gills and at the base of the fins. The VHS virus is not harmful to humans. Any fish kills or sick fish should be reported to the fisheries division of the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources at 1-800-858-1549.